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Thursday, September 27th, 2012
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Federal Policy & Business

Senators vow to avert sequestration cuts
Federal Times: Six senators are vowing to work across party lines to head off stiff automatic budgets cuts set to take effect in January."We are committed to working together to help forge a balanced, bipartisan deficit reduction package to avoid damage to our national security, important domestic priorities, and our economy," Sens. Carl Levin, D-Mich., John McCain, R-Ariz. and four other lawmakers wrote in a Sept. 21 letter to Senate leaders. "All ideas should be put on the table and considered."

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USPS prepares for second default in two months
Government Executive: The U.S. Postal Service will default this week on a $5.6 billion congressionally mandated obligation to prefund retiree health benefits, marking the second time in two months the cash-strapped agency has done this.The Postal Service last month failed to pay $5.5 billion for its fiscal 2011 prepayment obligation, which originally was due September 2011 but was deferred by Congress until Aug. 1.

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Hey, Big Saver!
The New York Times: If you want to know what the future of the American economy looks like — when the unemployment rate will return to below 6 percent, or when annual growth will climb back above 3 percent — it's helpful to stop thinking for a moment about those families in serious financial distress. That's because the future of the U.S. economy relies, in large part, on another group of people living in fear: the millions of Americans who have a little disposable income.

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The Farm Bill Expires Next Week. Does It Matter?

Governing: The farm bill, one of the most complicated and wide-ranging pieces of legislation that Congress deals with every few years, will expire next week. But does it really matter?Not much -- at least for now.In recent weeks, Washington wonks have been scratching their heads to determine what, exactly, the impact of the bill's expiration will be.

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Federal Government IT

FTC cracks down on firms in cyber spying
San Francisco Chronicle: Washington -- A software program developed to track the locations of rented computers secretly collected confidential and personal information about consumers, including medical records, bank statements and even webcam pictures of couples engaged in sex, the Federal Trade Commission said in a settlement that bars eight companies from any further cyber spying.

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America: Land of the Free, Home of the Internet
Government Technology: Amid ongoing discussions of cybersecurity, Net neutrality and censorship, Internet freedom in the U.S. is the second highest in the world, according to a recent report titled Freedom on the Net 2012. Watchdog group Freedom House released the report on Sept. 24 with detailed analysis of Internet freedom in 47 countries. The 662-page report rates each country's Internet freedom based on the degree of impediment to Internet access, limits on content and user rights violations.

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GSA may have to start over on governmentwide cellphone plan
Nextgov: A decision posted Tuesday by the Office of the Comptroller General could complicate the government's goal of saving billions of dollars by consolidating contracts for mobile phone services.

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FCC to Vote on Proposal to Use Old Nextwave Spectrum
CIO: IDG News Service (Washington, D.C., Bureau) — The U.S. Federal Communications Commission is scheduled to vote on a proposal that would allow AT&T to offer mobile broadband service on 20MHz of spectrum it purchased in August along with spectrum holding company NextWave Wireless.

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Knowledge Center: Special Reports & Whitepapers

Linux in the Mainstream: Growing Deployment of Business-Critical Workloads
Linux is one of two operating systems that rode the x86 server market over the past decade and established itself as a mainstream solution for supporting deployments of business-oriented application workloads. This upward progression has led Linux to its current role as a platform capable of supporting business-critical workloads on a broad variety of hardware architectures.

This IDC whitepaper takes a look at the growth of Linux as a server operating system and how deployment form factors have changed over time. Today, commercial Linux has become a key platform across many workloads. This paper considers both workload data and the ecosystem that has grown up to support the opportunity for Linux deployments, including application software, application development and deployment software, and infrastructure software.

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Automating to Transform Legacy IT Operations, While Minimizing Risk

An i360Gov Special Report.

Under near-constant pressure to adapt to change and 'innovate' with less, government agencies are seeking new ways to adapt and transform legacy IT operations.

Many are finding they must work hard to mitigate risks associated with change in those user migration efforts, utilizing key best practices tools and procedures that will help ensure more streamlined, efficient implementations. In many cases, agencies are working to accomplish migration from Windows XP to Windows 7, which must be completed soon as support for XP is slated to end in the coming year. To deal with this situation, agencies are working to reduce the cost of managing application compatibility, without compromising on output.

Download this new i360Gov special report to learn more, including case studies from your peers in government.

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Why should I care about PDF application security?
Today, government agencies battle cyber attackers who are intent on stealing data, crashing systems, damaging reputations, or simply showing off hacking skills. This paper discusses:

The application security measures customers should be looking for when selecting software to prevent attacks, including the concept of “layered defense in depth.” Security experts widely agree that the best defense is a layered defense in depth because it protects on multiple fronts using tools built into both the application and the OS.
The results of third-party security testing for Adobe® Acrobat® X and Adobe Reader® X software when it comes to protecting organizations from attacks that could lead to disastrous consequences. This white paper is an Adobe-authored piece based on research conducted by iSec. The original iSec research paper, due to its technical complexity, will be made available to Sales on a request-only basis.

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Why the future of the cloud is open
Choosing how to build a hybrid cloud is perhaps the most strategic decision IT leaders will make this decade. It’s a choice that will determine their organization’s competitiveness, flexibility, and IT economics for the next 10 years.

That’s because, done right, a cloud delivers strategic advantages to the business by redirecting resources from simply maintaining the status quo to true innovation. But only an open cloud delivers on the full strategic business value and promise of cloud computing. Download the whitepaper to learn more.

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Linux versus Microsoft Windows
In a currently tight budgetary climate, government organizations are working to function as cost-effectively as possible. Agencies also face regulatory mandates for energy efficiency and data center consolidation that are driving them to consolidate data centers, servers, applications and services, to reduce costs. IT managers are moving to commodity x86-based servers to replace legacy RISC servers.

In the enterprise computing arena, of the server operating sytems that were prevalent a decade ago, only two are likely to dominate by 2015 - - Linux and Microsoft Windows, according to research from IDC.

Download this i360Gov whitepaper to learn more.

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Continuous monitoring of FISMA security controls - a help or hindrance?
Continuous monitoring of the NIST 800-53 security controls is a goal of FISMA 2.0, but will it be more of a help or a hindrance to Federal Agencies? Please click here to see our discussion on this topic by requesting our white papers, "Securing the Enterprise" and "Mapping the NIST 800-53 controls".

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Defense / Intelligence / Homeland Security

Obama: U.S. Consulate attack was terrorism
Army Times: ABOARD AIR FORCE ONE — The White House said Wednesday that President Obama considers the deadly assault on the U.S. consulate in Libya a terrorist attack.White House spokesman Jay Carney said it is “certainly the case that it is our view as an administration, and the president’s view, that it was a terrorist attack.”

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U.S. Navy: 4 Missile Cruisers to Remain in Service
Defense News: Four Aegis missile cruisers scheduled to end their active careers in March will instead be kept in service, the U.S. Navy said Sept. 26.The ships — the Cowpens, Anzio, Vicksburg and Port Royal — were to be decommissioned as part of a budget drawdown.

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Report: Americans Too Fat for War
Security Management: A group of retired generals and admirals are arguing that Americans are too fat to fight in the military. The group Mission Readiness released the report "Too Fat to Fight?" to argue that junk food should be taken out of schools.The report states that "being overweight or obese turns out to be the leading medical reason why applicants fail to qualify for military service." More than 27 percent of Americans age 17 to 24 are too heavy to join the military if they want to, according to statistics cited in the report. And the military discharges about 1,200 first-term enlistees before their contracts are up because of weight problems.

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Yemen To Get UAVs From The U.S.
Aviation Week: SANAA, Yemen — Amid a series of controversial U.S. air strikes against high-level Al-Qaeda officials in the Arabian Peninsula, and renewed military cooperation with Yemen, officials in Sanaa are now expecting to get a supply of

weaponry from the Pentagon, including four of their own UAVs.An anonymous Yemeni defense official, who was not authorized to speak with the press, tells Aviation Week that Yemen is receiving four AeroVironment RQ-11 Raven UAVs. The 1.9-kg Raven is equipped with sensors for target acquisition, and infrared cameras capable of displaying persons carrying weapons.

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Government Healthcare - Policy & IT

AHA, AAHC react to Sebelius warning about EHRs, upcoding, and fraud
Government Health IT: Hospital organizations are responding to a stern letter sent Sept. 24 by U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder and Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius, which warns against using electronic health records to artificially inflate Medicare and Medicaid payments.

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5 IT Tips For State Health Insurance Exchanges
InformationWeek: Building health insurance exchange (HIX) websites where millions of small businesses and individuals can enroll in health plans promises to be one of the most time-consuming IT infrastructure endeavors that states have confronted in recent years. So says a new report from the University of Massachusetts Medical School (UMMS).

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S.D. will not run its own health insurance exchange
Healthcare IT News: South Dakota will not set up its own health insurance exchange, instead deferring to the federal government to operate and pay for a key component required by the federal healthcare overhaul, Gov. Dennis Daugaard said Wednesday.President Barack Obama's healthcare law requires that each state have such an exchange, an online marketplace where patients and small businesses can shop for health insurance among competing plans. The federal government will directly operate and fund exchanges in states that choose not to operate their own.

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CDC: Another 400 West Nile cases reported in U.S. in past week
Fox News: More than 400 new U.S. cases of West Nile virus emerged in the last week, in an outbreak that remains the second worst on record but has begun to show signs of slowing.So far this year, 3,545 cases have been reported to federal health officials as of September 25, up from 3,142 reported the week before, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) said in its weekly update of outbreak data.

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Knowledge Center: Webinars

Managing Government Records Directive: Next Steps for Compliance

Wed, October 17th, 2012 at 2:00pm EST

On August 24th, the Managing Government Records Directive was issued to mark the beginning of an Executive Branch-wide effort to reform records management policies and practices and to develop a 21st century framework for the management of Government records. Attend this complimentary i360Gov educational webinar and learn from leading experts how to implement a robust records management framework to eliminate paper and move decisively toward electronic recordkeeping.

Our panel of experts will share the latest techniques and technologies federal agencies can employ to comply with this Presidential Directive. Specifically you will learn how to:

How to build a business case for electronic records management
Convert paper records into electronic searchable information
Capture and process all documents, including paper and electronic formats, to reduce processing time
Manage all permanent records in an electronic format and how to accession them
Use technology to reduce the burden of records management
Embed records management requirements into cloud architectures

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Achieving Transparency through Archiving and eDiscovery
Learn how public sector organizations are utilizing archiving and eDiscovery technology to lower costs and risks, address legal challenges and make compliance with FOIA productions more efficient.

Unfortunately, ensuring that government data is accessible for FOIA and litigation remains a thorny challenge and becomes increasingly challenging when data is created and travels across multiple mediums. However, government organizations can implement technology to reduce the risks related to eDiscovery and FOIA compliance. Moreover, once in-house capabilities are adopted, they can be used for both FOIA and litigation.

eDiscovery is an important issue for both federal and state and local agencies. Not only has information governance and eDiscovery recently been addressed in the Presidential Mandate and the Digital Government Strategy, but NASCIO has placed eDiscovery in the top ten list for 2012, especially as related to records management, archiving and digital preservation.

Speakers include:

Allison Stanton, Director of E-Discovery, Office of the Assistant Attorney General, Department of Justice, Civil Division
Joan Moumbleaux, J.D., M.L.I.S., an information professional within NOAA's Fisheries Restoration Center
Allison Jane Walton, eDiscovery Counsel in PMM, Symantec Corporation

Download this on-demand webinar to learn how the right archiving and eDiscovery tools and workflows:

Can execute a common classification and retention schedule across in the archive
Perform federated searched across critical data sources
Bring context and relevance to information to help individuals and organizations find what information they need, when they need it, saving time and money
Enable government entities to quickly adapt to the new federal mandate, while simultaneously reducing risks in crucial areas such as: legal/litigation services, investigative operations and in improving the production time for Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests.

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Enabling Smarter Cities with the IBM Intelligent Operations Center
City leaders around the globe are seeking new ways to sustain high service levels to their residents and businesses. To continue providing their constituents opportunities for prosperity and growth, leaders must find innovative ways to connect and improve their core urban systems, from transportation to water to public safety to healthcare and city operations.Join us for an in-depth look at how IBM is helping cities drive sustainable economic growth and deliver citizen centered services by leveraging information to make better decisions, anticipating problems to resolve them pro-actively, and coordinating resources and processes to operate effectively. The IBM Intelligent Operations Center, the cornerstone of our expanding smarter cities solution portfolio, can help urban leaders make their cities a better place to live and do business.

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Analytics Solutions for Public Safety: Creating a Better Place to Work and Live
Cities need new, smarter ways to protect and serve their citizens. IBM smarter cities solutions for public safety are designed to

integrate and analyze information to help agencies predict and prevent crime, respond rapidly to incidents, coordinate efforts with other teams and improve the efficiency of case management.By offering a full range of information management, collaboration, visualization and analytics capabilities, smarter cities law enforcement solutions can deliver virtually immediate value and provide a foundation for adding further competencies over time. With these solutions, cities can build an intelligent infrastructure that helps improve operational efficiency and provide a safer, more desirable environment for citizens.This webcast is available on demand 24x7 for your convenience. Register now!

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Leveraging Technology to Modernize the Tax Collection Process
According to the Center for Digital Government's 2010 Digital States Survey, 16 percent of states listed tax system modernization among their top five technology priorities.

Attend this complimentary i360Gov one-hour educational webinar to find out how leading state and local government agencies are modernizing their tax and revenue processes by combining intelligent capture with process management to dramatically reduce costs, errors, and risks associated paper. Automating your paper-based tax processes will put funds in your coffers more quickly and help your jurisdiction balance the budget.

Specifically, you will learn how to:

Capture savings by dramatically shortening the time needed to process tax and revenue collections.
Reduce your document processing, storage, and retrieval costs by removing the dependency on paper.
Consolidate and replace antiquated scanning systems so that you can collect all of the revenue you are owed, quickly and efficiently.
Learn how other state and local agencies modernized their tax collection process by implementing intelligent capture solutions.

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Energy - Policy & Technology

Coal vs. natural gas: It's complicated
Houston Chronicle: The glut of natural gas unleashed by hydraulic fracturing - and the resulting low prices - make it seem like a no-brainer: Ditch coal-fired electric plants, with all their baggage about air pollution and water consumption, and switch to natural gas.Trends over the past year suggest that's starting to happen nationally, as natural gas has overtaken coal for generating electricity.

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US DoD to Spend $1.8 Billion on Clean Energy by 2025
Clean Technica: According to the latest report published by Colarado-based Pike Research, the US Department of Defense is expected to spend $1.8 billion on clean energy by 2025. The clean energy programs also include conservation measures which are expected to increase steadily over the next 12 years.The various branches of the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) combine to become one of the largest consumers of energy in the world, with consumption of around 3.8 billion kWh of electricity and 120 million barrels of oil annually, totalling $20 billion spent on energy directly per year.

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EPA Says Wyoming Fracking Results Are Consistent
The Wall Street Journal (online registration required): The Environmental Protection Agency said new government tests of groundwater near Pavillion, Wyo., have yielded results similar to data it released last year, when it suggested chemicals in the water were linked to hydraulic fracturing.The EPA's contention was dismissed by Encana Corp., the natural-gas company operating in the area, which said the EPA was still offering a "flawed" interpretation of test results.

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Adapting Gas-Fired Power to a Greener Grid
The New York Times: Making electricity from natural gas is cleaner than making it from coal or oil, but as gas gains a bigger market share in the business in the United States and elsewhere, the idea of what constitutes a good generator is shifting. General Electric announced a line of new models on Wednesday, with two interesting environmental twists.One is efficiency. New natural gas plants burn the fuel in something that resembles a jet engine that is chained to the ground and turning a generator. Over the years, as the technology of such models has improved, they have been converted a given quantity of gas to larger and larger amounts of electricity.

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State & Local Government - Policy & Technology

Cities and Counties Try Facebook for Government
Government Technology: Steve Craig, the 311 director of Somerville, Mass., believes that social media is a handy delivery tool for city service — but it's technically one that jurisdictions can do without.Somerville isn't one of those jurisdictions, though. "I don't think you absolutely need it to make a system work, but it just makes sense," Craig said. "It's something that there's a high demand for, so I don't see the reason someone would go down the path of 311 and not factor this into their overall plan."

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PA: Witnesses to detail barriers to Pa. voter ID law
USA Today: HARRISBURG, Pa. (AP) -- Lawyers hoping to persuade a judge to order a halt to a new Pennsylvania law that requires voters to show photo identification at the polls are bringing people to court today to testify about hurdles they have encountered trying to get a valid ID.The testimony in the hastily arranged hearing is expected to last much of the day. After that, all eyes will be on Commonwealth Court Judge Robert Simpson, who hinted after the hearing's first day this week that an injunction is possible.

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NY: Defense of Marriage Act before NY appeals court
Fox News: A U.S. appeals court in New York is set to take its turn Thursday at considering the constitutionality of the Defense of Marriage Act, a federal law restricting the recognition of same-sex unions that has already been struck down in several other places.

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Rural States in Hunt for NCLB Waivers
Education Week (online subscription required): The seven states that have applied for the latest round of waivers under the No Child Left Behind Act represent a large swath of rural America, ensuring that the U.S. Department of Education's experiment in awarding flexibility in exchange for certain education-improvement promises will play out in a diverse set of states with vastly different geographies and student populations.

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Education - Policy & Technology

New Mobile App for WebStudy LMS Users
Campus Technology: A new mobile app for Android and Apple smartphone users of WebStudy's learning management system is now available.WebStudy, a learning management provider located in Wyynewood, PA, partnered with CollegeMobile to create WebStudy Mobile. The new app includes a number of features designed to make it interactive, said Curt Corbi, WebStudy's chief

technology officer, in a prepared statement released Tuesday by the company. "Since the application is not 'browser based,'" said Corbi, "it goes beyond informational to interactive, allowing students to participate in class forums and read, send e-mail while heading to class on the train or waiting for the bus."

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17 More Top Universities Offer Free Cyber Courses
Homeland Security Today: SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Seventeen leading universities in the U.S. and abroad will start offering free cyber courses through the online education platform Coursera, Mountain View-based Coursera announced.The announcement underscores the rapid expansion of so-called MOOCs, or massive open online courses, that are reshaping the higher education landscape.

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Seven free resources for teaching about the election
eSchool News: The 2012 presidential election is drawing near, and educators across the country are using campaign efforts as a chance to teach students about the democratic process, the major issues in the race, and how these issues might affect students now and in the future.

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Students Get Hands-On Experience with Nanoscience Program
Campus Technology: Students studying nanotechnology at Southern Connecticut State University (SCSU) have a new way to explore concepts about the nanoscale.The New Haven, CT institution has implemented a new program that enables students to create and work with nanoscale structures without the need for a cleanroom.

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